Post 9-11-71

Observations on the Panthers

As a black man who has volunteered a portion of my time, clothes, and what little money I could spare to the Black Panther Party, I feel it is my duty to question the logic in your assumption that because Bobby Seale was not sentenced to death and most of the Panthers under arrest on various charges are now free after being acquitted, this proves that a black man can now get justice in an American court, and that no conspiracy exists against the Panthers.

I find such conclusions to be without foundation. Consider these points:

1. The Black Panther free breakfast program has been constantly harassed by the police in centers all over the country. This harassment has gone as far as attempted intimidation of the youngsters who participate in the program.

2. The grand jury indictments against the police officers in Chicago for tampering with evidence certainly smacks of a conspiracy against the Panthers. Not only that, but the police indictments—and in other cases, the acquittals of the Panthers—came so long after the crime that the Panther party had already been virtually wiped out and written off by the public as an evil force.

3. No other political group has had all its leaders killed or forced into exile.

4. The Black Panthers have been called the most violent group in America today, but a careful study of violence will show that the most offensive, emotionally charged crimes—the mass murders, bombings, assassinations, lynchings, etc.—are done by white people.

5. Recently, Heidi Fletcher, accused in Washington, D.C., of bank robbery and murder, didn't have to post bail and was allowed to stay with friends of the family. Angela Davis was also accused of being an accomplice to murder (even though her direct connection to the crime has never been proved) but she can get no bail.

6. Lt. Calley, a supposedly mature man, was convicted of unmercifully killing a number of South Vietnamese, but his sentence of life was quickly reduced to 20 years. George Jackson was serving from two years to life for stealing $70, a "crime" of economics committed in his mid-teens.

This is a break for the black man? Maybe we are not talking about the same kind of justice.

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